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SUBJECT: DDR PROGRESSES: CHANTING HAKAMA WOMEN URGE THEIR MEN TO
WAGE PEACE, NOT WAR

REF: A) KHARTOUM 1071

B) KHARTOUM 987

C) KHARTOUM 927

D) KHARTOUM 517

¶1. (U) On August 20, Emboffs traveled to the South Kordofan village of Lagawa, to attend a ceremony sponsored by the UN Demobilization, Disarmament and Re-integration (DDR) Unit, celebrating the final performance of the Lagawa "Hakamat" and the distribution of goats to its members.

¶2. (U) The Hakamat are traditional women singers of the Arab tribes of Darfur and Kordofan. In peacetime, the Hakamat sing the praises of local leaders and notables, in return for a gratuity. (If a reward is not forthcoming, they instead deride their subjects in scathing terms.) In wartime, Hakamat publicly chant demands that village men go into battle, demeaning the manhood of any who show reluctance. Tribal leaders told poloff that no man could ignore the Hakama call to battle as "their manhood and marriage prospects were at stake." Hakama women have performed this role both in Sudan's civil war and in Darfur.

¶3. (U) Following the signing of the CPA, UN DDR started a program seeking to change the Hakama cultural practice of inciting war. "It had to be subtle but persuasive," said UN DDR Program Manager Basil Massey. Taking advantage of the fact that in the years after the civil war, the surrounding areas remained dangerous for anyone to travel far from their home village, UN DDR arranged for UN peacekeepers to convoy 30 women to a workshop explaining the CPA. "The workshop on the CPA was far less important than the joyous reunion of the women that ensued", said Massey.

¶4. (U) Yet despite an initial positive response to the workshop, village leaders, local government officials, and other Hakama women remained reluctant to further endorse UNDP's DDR programs. Undaunted, the UN continued to offer economic-support programs to villagers, while Kadugli-based UN peacekeepers patrolled aggressively. Now, all villagers in the Lagawa area are able to travel freely, even at night, said Egyptian UN peacekeeping-battalion commander Colonel Sayed Abd el-Hady. Yet without a political commitment at the national level, local support remained tenuous, said Massey.

¶5. (U) That commitment came, according to Massey, with the arrival of Aameera Haq as Deputy UNSRSG. He said that Haq made it a point to listen to (while not necessarily agreeing with) Bashir-government officials. For example, Massey said that when GOS officials objected to UN Human Rights reports and references to GOS military intelligence practices, Haq defended the reporting saying that "human rights reporting is what the UN does, and we are going to continue to do it," but added that she would refer to military intelligence activities as coming from "government security forces."

Massey claimed that for the first time the GOS officials began to feel they were being listened to and not ignored. With support at national level, any local hesitancy to support UNDP's DDR programs "vanished," claimed Massey.

16. (U) On August 20, UNDP ceremonially presented a herd of goats to each Zaghawa Hakama woman for publicly renouncing their traditional chanting for war, while publicly announcing their commitment to peace. Amidst the Hakama women chanting "Yes to peace, no to war," while stomping the ground and shouting, Massey highlighted that while the distribution of the goats served to increase the Hakamat financial stake in overall peace, the public ceremony also underscored their public commitment and reputation in support of peace and not war.

17. (SBU) Comment: While UNDP's Hakama women's program is small and affects only the villages in the immediate area, it represents a successful use of economic, military and diplomatic efforts to change attitudes away from war towards peace. Massey said that he employed this integrative model successfully in Afghanistan, where he enticed different warring tribes to meet and socialize over several days, promoted mutual economic interaction and shared economic stakes, coordinated with the military to provide security, and sought higher level political commitment. For DDR in Sudan to be successful, UN DDR will have to duplicate this model on a larger scale and in very remote locations. While UN DDR has made it past some initial hurdles of acceptance by the regime and local communities, it now must move forward with its DDR plan, assuming that donors are able to fund the required USD 385 million, and that significant numbers of armed elements remain willing to disarm.

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